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AUTHOR Davidson, Jane S.; Martin, Jennifer L.
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ABSTRACT

A five-part questionnaire was used to determine the degree of effectiveness of homemaking teacher certification programs as perceived by 362 vocational homemaking teachers in two geographical areas of Texas. Responses revealed the extent to which graduates of home economics certification programs: (1) felt equipped to help youth and adults solve current socioeconomic problems of family living; (2) were prepared to meet demands for teaching in public schools; (3) possessed specific skills required of homemaking teachers; and (4) were acquainted with vocational education concepts and components. Results indicated that skills for effective management of vocational homemaking programs need to be strengthened in areas of teaching techniques for working with special needs learners, program organizational requirements, utilization of advisory councils, leadership organizations, counseling techniques, and use of commercial equipment. A need on the part of the teachers for increased exposure to occupational programs, vocational legislation concepts, and funding procedures was also indicated. (JM)

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Effectiveness of Vocational Home Economics Teacher Certification Programs

Jane S. Davidson, Ph.D.

Jennifer L. Martin, M.S.

Department of Home Economics

Lamar University

Box 10035

Beaumont, Texas 77710

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EFFECTIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL HOME ECONOMICS TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Societal changes affecting public school education are of such magnitude that attention must be given to strengthening teacher preparation programs. A five-part questionnaire was used to determine the degree of effectiveness of homemaking teacher certification programs as perceived by 362 vocational homemaking teachers in two geographical areas of Texas.

Responses revealed the extenet to which graduates of home economics certification programs (1) felt equipped to help youth and adults solve current socio-economic problems of family living, (2) were prepared to meet demands for teaching in public schools, (3) possessed specific skills required of homemaking teachers, and (4) were acquainted with vocational education concepts and componenets.

Respondents identified that career education and family health concepts were limited in pre-service education programs. Skills for effective management of vocational homemaking programs need to be strengthened in areas of teaching techniques for working with special needs learners, program organizational requirements, utilization of advisory councils, leadership organizations, counseling techniques, and use of commercial equipment. A need for increased exposure to occupational programs, vocational legislation concepts and funding procedures was also indicated.

Introduction

Societal changes affecting public school education are of such magnitude that attention must be given to strengthening teacher preparation programs. Home Economics is a professional field which attempts to serve society through its efforts to solve and mediate family problems and problems of the larger society which impinge on the family. Teacher education programs designed for certifying vocational homemaking teachers must, therefore, provide training opportunities commensurate with the concerns of families who will be affected by the vocational homemaking education programs in the public schools. Learning experiences within required home economics core courses may need evaluation and revision in order to keep pace with changing societal needs. Determining expressed strengths and weaknesses of pre-service education programs by surveying present teachers should facilitate better use of human and material resources in home economics departments which are responsible for home economics teacher certification programs.

Programs designed to prepare persons for home life began early in the twentieth century with the Vocational Education Act of 1917, commonly known as the Smith-Hughes Act. Under the George-Dean Act of 1936, teacher training programs for vocational education were recognized and received authorized funding. Beginning in 1946, funding for teacher education in home economics vocational education was allocated from state funds for homemaking education programs. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 and subsequent Acts of 1968-1976 provided for ancillary services and activities to

prepare vocational homemaking teachers.

Presently, 19 universities in the state of Texas and 311 universities in the nation provide certification to teach vocational homemaking education (Harper, Bishop and Stanley, 1976). Consumer and homemaking education programs in the United States have the largest enrollment in vocational education programs in secondary schools. In 1979-1980, Texas secondary schools reported 245,627 students enrolled in Consumer and Homemaking Education classes (Butler, 1980).

Secondary home economics curriculum requirements are revised periodically to reflect concerns addressed by vocational education legislative acts and amendments. Early programs in home economics emphasized work in the home as having a direct influence on family life. The objective of vocational education in home economics was described in 1948 as providing instruction which will enable families to improve the quality of their family life through the efficient development and utilization of human and material resources (Williamson and Lyle, 1954).

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 officially established the occupational programs as part of vocational home economics. Vocational legislation in 1976 gave emphasis to programs for the occupation of homemaking which included consumer education, food and nutrition, family living and parenthood education, child development and guidance, housing and home management (including resource management) and clothing and textiles (Federal Register, October 3, 1977).

Academic preparation of persons seeking certification in vocational home economics education provides a broad base of know-

ledge in subject matter areas of consumer economics, child development, family relationships, foods and nutrition, textiles and clothing, and housing and management. Guidelines for vocational secondary homemaking education in various states delineate the nature of consumer and vocational homemaking education and occupational homemaking education programs. Curriculum planning in home economics certification programs must periodically change in scope to prepare teachers who can provide realistic learning experiences for youth and adults in vocational homemaking programs.

Competencies needed by vocational homemaking teachers form the basis for designing teacher education programs. The scope of responsibilities for the vocational homemaking teacher is wide and varied. In addition to comprehension of home economics subject matter content and inherent methodology for teaching, teachers in homemaking education programs in Texas are required to provide a minimum of adult education based on evident needs of adults in a community. The teacher is also expected to make home visits and supervise extended learning experiences for students in their homes. The youth organization, Future Homemakers of America, is directed by the homemaking teacher as an integral part of the classroom.

The competencies for teaching homemaking also include responsibility for keeping accurate records for various report forms submitted during the year. Skill in utilizing an advisory group is considred necessary. Cerified homemaking teachers are expected to understand needs and characteristics of special population groups such as handicapped learners, slow learners, and various socio-economic and cultural groups.

Certifying teachers must be aware of homemaking program

characteristics. Consumer and homemaking education programs are designed to help develop skills for homemaking as well as prepare for professional careers. Four additional programs are offered in the State of Texas. Coordinated Vocational ACademic Education is designed for students whose environment has not stimulated learning, causing them to be under-achievers. Home Economics Cooperative Education provides work experience outside the classroom which is supervised by the homemaking teacher. Pre-employment Education in Home Economics aids students in developing salable skills during middle school years. Homemaking programs designed as Vocational Education for the Handicapped are also available for handicapped students.

Curricula and training programs are needed to insure an adequate supply of qualified research, teaching, and public education personnnel that can help families handle major problems of everyday living. Home Economics is unique because, unlike other subject matter fields, it has as a focus the well being of the family and of individuals and their contribution to society (Cross, 1978).

Home economics educatiors identified concerns in 1978 for strengthening pre-service professional preparation in Home Economics Education programs (Griggs, 1978). Recommendations identified the need to help students have some understanding of the interrelationship of all the experiences and courses in home economics and to prepare students to work with diverse populations. Students should be prepared to exhibit the competencies needed by home economics educators. Goals of all teacher education programs should include motivation for continuous learning and a commitment to serving others.

Objectives

The present research was undertaken to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To ascertain to what extent graduates of Home Economics Education Certification programs have felt equipped to help youth and adults solve current problems of family living.
2. To determine degree to which practicing teachers feel prepared to meet the demands of teaching in public schools.
3. To determine perceived areas of strength and weakness among vocational homemaking teachers in two geographical areas of Texas recognized by the Texas Education Agency.
4. To identify specific skills that should be emphasized in the undergraduate programs.

Procedure

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, the researchers developed a five-part questionnaire. Part I solicited demographic data. In Part II, respondents were asked to indicate the optimum number of hours in each home economics subject core area they felt would adequately prepare them to teach homemaking. In Part III, the teachers were requested to assess their university training for preparation to teach eleven subject matter content areas in a manner relevant to current socio-economic conditions. Part IV consisted of a list of 23 skills required of a homemaking teacher in Texas. Teachers were asked to rate their university

training as to the development of these skills. The final part of the questionnaire contained a list of nine vocational education concepts and components about which homemaking teachers in Texas are expected to possess and use knowledge. They were requested to rate their university training in acquainting them with the concepts and components of vocational homemaking programs. Parts III, IV, and V utilized a "1" to "5" rating skill with "1" representing "no preparation" and "5" representing "excellent preparation". The instrument was subjected to a pilot test by ten vocational homemaking teachers who completed the instrument and pointed out areas in which more clarity was needed.

The finalized questionnaire was mailed to all vocational homemaking teachers in the Texas Education Agency Areas III and IX. The sample consisted of 470 Area III teachers and 241 Area IX teachers for a total of 711. The rate of response was 50.9 percent with 362 questionnaires returned.

Results and Discussion

The semester hour requirements in the six professional subject core areas differ at the nineteen institutions offering vocational homemaking certification in Texas. Respondents indicated the number of hours they felt would adequately prepare them to teach homemaking. Table 1 presents their replies in ranges of hours as well as the mean number of hours as figured from raw data. A "no answer" response on this and succeeding tables indicates either that subjects did not answer the question or that more than one answer was given to the query. The respondents felt the greatest number of hours was needed in the family relations/child development area where the

mean was 12.06 hours. The smallest number of hours (mean = 4.12 hours) was needed for adequate preparation in the general foundations of home economics.

Insert TABLE 1 about here

Vocational homemaking teachers are expected to help families and individuals, who are significantly affected by currect social and economic trends. Table 2 presents the respondents' assessment of their college or university training in preparing them to teach the homemaking subject matter content areas in a manner relevant to current socio-economic conditions. The assessment could range from a "1" representing "no preparation" to a "5" representing "excellent preparation". The mean assessment of the sample in individual subject matter content areas in also shown in Table 2. The highest mean assessment was 4.33 for both Clothing Selection and Construction and Food Selection and Preparation. Other means exceeding 4.00 included Nutrition (4.31) and Child Development (4.17). The lowest mean assessment was 2.07 for Home Nursing (Family Health). The lack of preparation in Home Nursing may be explained by the fact that 1081 enrollment for Family Health courses in Texas was only 788 secondary students. Colleges and universities are evidently not concentrating on subject matter in small demand (Texas Education Agency, 1980). The only additional subject matter content area receiving a mean assessment below an "average" rating of "3" was Career Education with a 2.78. Career education, which entered the homemaking curriculum in 1963, was the most recent of the eleven subject matter content areas to become a part of university preparation.

According to demographic data collected for this study, over 50 percent of the respondents completed certification requirements prior to 1965; therefore, they were not likely to receive preparation in an area not yet considered an integral part of the vocational homemaking curriculum.

Insert TABLE 2 about here

A wide variety of skills is required of vocational homemaking teachers. Table 3 shows the respondents' assessment of their college or university training in developing certain of these skills. The ratings again ranged from "1" representing "no preparation" to "5" representing "excellent preparation". The mean assessment for each skill area is also presented. The highest mean indicated was 4.11 for Teaching Techniques; the lowest was 1.52 for Techniques for Handicapped Students.

Techniques for Teaching Slow Learners, Gifted Learners, and various Socio-Economic/Cultural Groups also received mean ratings slightly above "2". Legislation mandating instruction for these groups of special learners was not provided until after 1976 (Federal Register, 1977). Additional means falling below the "average" rating of "3" were the following: Report Forms/Record Keeping, Home Experiences, FHA/HERO, Home Visits, Student Conferences, Counseling Techniques, Budget, Parent Conferences, Commercial Equipment Use, Adult or Young Homemaker Programs, and Advisory Council.

Insert TABLE 3 about here

Vocational homemaking teachers are expected to possess and use knowledge in many areas related to the homemaking program. Table 4 shows the respondents' assessment of their college or university training in acquainting them with selected vocational education concepts and components. The highest mean assessment was 3.52 for Professional Organizations. Vocational Education for the Handicapped receive the lowest assessment, 2.47. Vocational Legislation and Funding along with the three additional occupational programs, CVAE, HECE, and PELE, received ratings below the "average" score of "3". Special workshops are conducted by the Texas Education Agency during the summer months to prepare teachers for specific occupational teaching assignments.

Insert TABLE 4 about here

Colleges and universities which certify teachers of vocational homemaking appear to be concentrating on subject matter content areas, where the average mean assessment for all areas was 3.67. The average rating for preparation in vocational education concepts and components was 3.01, whil the average assessment for skills preparation was 2.91.

Conclusions

All teacher education programs in home economics need continued updating and review to remain viable in today's rapidly changing society. "Change permeates all aspects of life and is synonymous with growth, development and learning" (Nies and LaBrecque, 1980). Effective teacher education programs will be those which

attempt to keep abreast of the emerging needs of society.

The institutions responsible for certifying vocational homemaking teachers who participated in this study seem to have provided a better than average preparation in home economics subject matter, sepecially in the areas of foods and nutrition, clothing selection and construction and child development. Areas needing additional emphasis are family health and career education. Family health concepts could be included in the foods and nutrition and child development course outlines. Career education can be made an integral part of all home economics subject matter areas as well as being covered in a general foundation course. In addition, in-service education programs can help teachers become more competent in identifying career possibilities.

Skills for teaching vocational homemaking have evidently received less emphasis than the home economics subject matter areas. Field experiences can be utilized to develop skills required for effective management of the vocational homemaking program. Confidence for working with special needs groups could be increased through both pre-service and in-service programs.

Knowledge of vocational homemaking organizational structure can aid teachers in developing effective programs. Pre-service programs should continue to encourage participation in professional organiztions. Increased exposure to vocational legislation and funding procedures is needed for helping teachers understand the full scope of vocational education.

Curriculum and programs at the pre-service level need to prepare teachers who are committed to the worth of every individual.

Teachers must know and be able to implement learning theory in home economics in varied settings. Professional home economics educators can help students develop the ability to interpret problems of family life as well as life in society.

TABLE 1

Percentage of teachers indicating number of hours needed for adequate preparation in subject core areas

Subject Core Area	Semester Hours										Mean Number of Hours
	0-3 %	4-6 %	7-9 %	10-12 %	13-15 %	16-18 %	19-21 %	22-24 %	Over 24 %	No Answer	
1. Family Relations/ Child Development	.9	1.5	14.5	69.1	8.3	3.6	0	2.1	0	24	12.06
2. Consumer Education/ Managemen.	1.2	10.3	56.3	29.3	.9	1.8	0	.3	0	21	9.74
3. Foods and Nutrition	.9	2.0	49.9	42.9	3.5	.6	0	0	.3	17	10.51
4. Clothing/Textiles	.6	2.1	54.7	39.4	2.4	.6	0	0	.3	22	10.36
5. Housing	4.7	57.8	29.6	7.3	.3	.3	0	0	0	21	7.24
6. General Foundations of Home Economics	70.9	23.6	2.4	2.1	0	.3	0	0	.6	32	4.12

TABLE 2

Assessment of university preparation to teach subject matter content areas

Subject Matter Content Area	Assessment of Vocational Homemaking Teachers						
	Excellent 5 %	4 %	3 %	2 %	No Preparation 1 %	No Answer	Mean Assessment
1. Career Education	9.7	16.1	33.0	14.9	16.3	13	2.78
2. Child Development	42.8	35.1	18.4	3.7	0	9	4.17
3. Clothing Selection and Construction	49.9	35.3	13.1	1.4	.3	11	4.33
4. Consumer Education	15.2	27.5	35.0	18.6	3.7	13	3.32
5. Family Relations	26.4	34.5	27.9	10.9	.3	14	3.76
6. Food Selection and Preparation	50.9	34.4	11.9	2.8	0	10	4.33
7. Home Management	30.9	33.7	25.5	9.9	0	9	3.86
8. Home Nursing	6.0	10.9	15.8	18.9	48.4	13	2.07
9. Housing and Home Furnishings	17.1	37.0	34.8	10.3	.9	11	3.59
10. Nutrition	48.3	35.7	15.1	.9	0	12	4.31
11. Textiles	31.5	34.1	22.2	11.1	1.1	10	3.84

TABLE 3

Assessment of university preparation in development of certain skills required of homemaking teachers

Skill Area	Assessment of Vocational Homemaking Teachers						
	Excellent 5 %	4 %	3 %	2 %	No Preparation 1 %	No Answer	Mean Assessment
Adult of Young Homemaker Programs	7.3	14.1	22.3	26.8	29.6	7	2.43
Advisory Council	3.4	10.4	18.3	26.1	41.9	6	2.07
Budget	7.0	19.4	25.9	22.5	25.1	7	2.61
Classroom Management Techniques	26.9	29.4	29.1	11.8	2.8	5	3.66
Commercial Equipment Use	9.5	17.3	19.2	18.4	35.7	3	2.47
Counseling Techniques	8.7	15.6	24.3	24.9	26.5	4	2.63
Demonstration Techniques	32.4	36.9	21.8	7.0	2.0	4	3.91
Evaluation Techniques	26.7	36.8	24.8	9.7	1.9	3	3.77
FHA/HERO	10.4	23.2	25.5	27.7	13.2	5	2.90
Home Experiences	13.4	18.7	27.0	28.1	12.8	3	2.92
Home Visits	13.2	15.4	28.9	27.5	15.1	5	2.84
Location and Use of Resource Materials for Curriculum Planning	27.1	32.1	23.5	14.0	3.1	4	3.67

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Skill Area	Assessment of Vocational Homemaking Teachers: Excellent 5 %	4 %	3 %	2 %	No Preparation 1 %	No Answer	Mean Assessment
Parent Conferences	7.0	16.8	25.7	29.3	21.2	4	2.59
Curriculum Planning Techniques	29.1	34.5	22.1	10.1	4.2	5	3.82
Public Relations	12.9	25.8	30.6	18.0	12.6	6	3.08
Report Forms/Record Keeping	13.6	20.9	27.9	23.7	13.9	3	2.97
Student Conferences	9.0	18.5	30.1	27.2	15.2	6	2.82
Teaching Techniques	38.3	39.2	18.0	3.9	.6	7	4.11
Techniques for Gifted Learners	3.1	9.5	22.9	20.1	44.4	4	2.07
Techniques for Handicapped Students	3.9	7.3	15.1	23.8	49.9	5	1.92
Techniques for Slow Learners	3.1	8.9	15.9	26.8	45.3	4	2.01
Techniques for Teaching Various Socio-Economic/Cultural Groups	7.5	12.3	21.2	23.7	35.4	3	2.33
Use of Audio-Visual Equipment	27.6	22.8	20.6	16.7	12.3	3	3.37

TABLE 4

Assessment of university training in acquainting teachers with vocational education concepts and components

Concept or Component	Assessment of Vocational Homemaking Teachers							
	Excellent				No Preparation	Program Nonexistent	No Answer	Mean Assessment
	5 %	4 %	3 %	2 %	1 %	At That Time		
Coordinated Vocational Academic Education	15.3	22.5	19.6	19.6	23.0	138	15	2.88
Home Economics Cooperative Education	12.0	23.1	23.1	18.1	23.6	138	8	2.82
Pre-employment Laboratory Education	10.1	18.2	19.7	23.7	28.3	154	10	2.58
Vocational Education for Handicapped	7.9	15.7	23.0	22.5	30.9	162	9	2.47
History/Philosophy of Home Economics	17.7	25.5	22.7	14.8	9.2		5	3.48
History/Philosophy of Vocational Education	20.8	20.8	24.7	18.3	15.4		6	3.13
Professional Organizations	26.3	28.5	22.6	16.2	6.4		4	3.52
State Program Standards	23.5	28.0	21.6	15.7	11.2		5	3.37
Vocational Legislation & Funding	16.2	18.2	22.9	19.6	23.2		4	2.85

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